

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

FROM: Will Travis, Executive Director [415/352-3653 travis@bcdc.ca.gov]
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SUBJECT: Alameda Landing (Second Review)
(For Board consideration on January 7, 2008)

Project Summary

Applicant. Community Improvement Commission of the City of Alameda. Contact: Douglas Cole, Redevelopment Manager.

Project Representative. Radford Hall, PhD., AICP, Land Planning and Permitting Consultant.

Existing Site. Formerly occupied by the Fleet Industrial Supply Center Facility (FISC Facility), the overall project site encompasses 94 acres in the City of Alameda, Alameda County. The site is bounded by Tinker Avenue on the south, Mariner Square Loop and the Webster Tube on the east, Coast Guard Housing on the West, and an approximately 3,200-foot-long pile-supported wharf to the north, on the waterfront edge of the Alameda/Oakland Estuary. The site was transferred from the United States Navy to the Alameda Community Improvement Commission through the base disposal process.

Built in the late 1940s and designed to allow large ships to moor adjacent to the warehouses, the wharf consists of a reinforced 10-inch to two-foot-thick concrete deck on imbedded concrete piles. The area under the deck, within the Commission's shoreline band jurisdiction, is devoid of vegetation and primarily consists of historic fill material. Approximately 10.6 acres of the proposed project is located within the Commission's shoreline band jurisdiction.

Project Proposed. The proposed project at Alameda Landing includes rehabilitating the existing concrete wharf for a mixed-use development, while maintaining a "working waterfront" character. The overall project includes 400,000 square feet of office space with supporting retail, a 20,000-square-foot health club, 300,000 square feet of retail, 300 housing units and over 10 acres of public waterfront park. Approximately 50,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space is proposed in the Commission's shoreline band jurisdiction at the eastern end of the project site. Approximately three acres of wharf deck would be removed due to the degraded condition of the pier piles, revealing approximately two acres of open Bay water and one acre of shoreline.



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The project includes an approximately 20- to 45-foot-wide public access trail connecting to the existing San Francisco Bay Trail at Mariner's Square, a parking lot, retail space, and a restaurant with outdoor dining. Since the Boards last review, the applicant has revised the building form, landscaped area, and added a temporary event space with seating area at the edge of the promenade. Moving west on the site, the project includes a waterfront plaza, a restaurant, outdoor dining, a palm grove, a newly exposed section of the shoreline with public access and native habitat planting, a gangway to a floating dock, and a waterfront promenade for pedestrian and bicycle access, varying from 25 to 45 feet wide.

The proposal also includes an approximately 61,900-square-foot waterfront green with a flexible sports playfield and rows of Cottonwood trees to the west, as well as the outdoor dining area adjacent to the proposed new headquarters of Clif Bar. To the west of the rehabilitated Clif Bar building, more cottonwood trees, a private daycare play area, and a lawn bocce court are proposed.

As in the earlier proposal, at the western end of the site, an approximate 100-foot-wide, 850-foot-long degraded section of the wharf would be removed along with the larger warehouse, and replaced with two smaller office buildings. A ramp down to the newly exposed shoreline at the water's edge with native planting and a public access pathway is still proposed, as is the playground and miracle league field, but the applicant has altered the parking turnaround at the end of Mitchell Avenue for a better future public access connection.

Prior Board Comments and Plan Revisions. In its November 2007 review, the Board commented on seven particular aspects of the public access design, including: (1) the amount of proposed lawn; (2) the maintenance and viability of the marsh; (3) the view opportunities from inside the site to the water; (4) the omnipresent aspect of cars; (5) the limited activities on the water side of the waterfront buildings that "engage the eye"; (6) the public safety aspects of the waterfront, especially at night; and (7) the "business-park" quality of the open spaces between the buildings that may appear as private spaces and not part of the city realm. A summary of the applicant's response is below; the full response is located on Exhibits A1 and A2. The Boards advice is sought on whether the applicant's responses adequately address the Boards prior comments.

1. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board stated that there appeared to be too much lawn proposed within the overall project, given California's present and future water shortage.*

Applicant's Response: In response to the Board's comments, the applicant stated that the City of Alameda Recreation and Parks Commission initially requested that the plan have extensive turf playfields due to the shortage of fields in Alameda, yet the applicant did not feel the site was appropriate for extensive ballfield complexes. To compensate, the waterfront lawn area would serve as an informal area for pick-up games and the lawn would utilize low water and low fertilizer turf-grass such as Bermudagrass, Tall Fescue hybrids or Ryegrass. In addition, the proposed ballfield on the west end of the site would be covered with a synthetic surface.

2. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board is concerned that the issues of plant types, drainage, maintenance and debris washed in by the tides may make a marsh less viable.*

Applicant's Response: The applicant has stated that there will be no proposed wetlands or marsh as part of the project. The shoreline area near the waterfront plaza would be six feet

above Mean High High Water, therefore it would rarely be inundated by storm or excessive high tides. The shoreline area on the west end of the site would be at approximately one to two feet above Mean High High Water, and may see periodic inundation due to storms or excessive high tides. Plant material in this shoreline area would be adaptable to the dry and occasional wet condition, and the Municipal Services District would maintain both areas. If the project area experiences an increase in inundation due to sea level rise, the City of Alameda would make appropriate adjustments to its maintenance and public access program at that time.

3. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board questioned the viability of the view corridors towards the estuary.*

Applicant's Response: In response to the Board's comments regarding the view corridors, the applicant has provided Exhibits A6 and A7, which show the various view opportunities across the estuary towards Oakland and San Francisco from the site and from Mitchell Avenue. The applicant also stated that the tree windrows are located perpendicular to the waterfront to allow long views from deep inside the site, and that the wharf deck slopes upward from Mitchell Avenue towards the edge of the wharf, resulting in no view of the water at all from the street.

4. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board was concerned about the omnipresent aspects of cars throughout the site.*

Applicant's Response: The applicant has stated the City of Alameda imposed the minimum required number of cars per 1,000 square feet of office space to reduce the amount of car trips and vehicular usage associated with the project. According to the applicant, municipalities usually impose a maximum number of parking spaces. The applicant has proposed three spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space and four and a half spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space. The applicant has also proposed retrofitting two of the existing warehouses for parking sheds, which would reduce the amount of visible parking spaces from public open spaces, and minimizing the appearance of parking fields with landscape buffers and tree planting.

5. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board was also concerned about the limited amount of activities along the waterfront that "engage the eye" and activating the water-side of the long office buildings.*

Applicant's Response: The applicant has stated that the public waterfront promenade at Alameda Landing runs for over half a mile; thus, the applicant feels that the entire waterfront cannot be fully activated at all times. The applicant has proposed activity "nodes," programmed areas of public and private uses that intersect with major public access, in order to activate the space. Exhibit A8 and A9 through A12 show the diverse assortment of activities programmed along the waterfront and how they might be used during the day and evening.

6. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board commented that the buildings without evening and weekend uses could create a desolate and dangerous place at times.*

Applicant's Response: In response, the applicant stated that public safety is a major priority, and extensive outdoor lighting, including large scale and pedestrian scale lighting, is proposed throughout the site. As required by the Master Plan conditions, a security program for the public parking areas is proposed, as is security for the individual office

buildings. In addition, emergency call boxes and wireless facilities will be provided along the promenade.

7. **Prior Board Comment:** *The Board was concerned that the “business-park” quality of the open spaces between the buildings may appear as private spaces and not part of the City realm.*

Applicant’s Response: The applicant stated that virtually all open space between the buildings are to be publicly accessible spaces, and many of the public open space corridors are defined by “windrows” that serve multiple purposes in the public realm. These purposes include breaking up the large-scale industrial waterfront, reinforcing the street system, and providing pedestrian connections. The windrows also frame views, provide visual markers to the waterfront, connect the public to the residential areas and neighboring sites, provide sun and wind protection, and various public programs located adjacent to the windrows to reinforcing their public nature.